

The Economy of Rarity: Animal-Catching, Cryptozoology, and the Mid-Twentieth-Century Zoo

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From the mid-twentieth century onward, zoological gardens across the world gradually developed an agenda of *ex situ* conservation. An obvious prerequisite for such an agenda to succeed was that the zoos in question obtained endangered animals from the wild. This article analyzes the “economy of rarity” created by this demand by focusing on the career of the Swiss couple Emy and Charles Cordier, who made a business of catching, acclimatizing, and transporting rare wildlife for some of the oldest and most prestigious zoos in the world. Beyond trading elusive animals, the Cordiers acted as producers and mediators of knowledge about these creatures, and they set up expeditions to find completely unknown and legendary ones—thus engaging in the (pseudo) science of cryptozoology. The success of their business drew on the broad cultural fascination for the rare, the elusive, and the unknown that characterized the mid-twentieth-century international zoo world. While the trade of the Cordiers—supported by a rhetoric of Western discovery—produced new types of knowledge, it also created and perpetuated ignorance. Moreover, the work of Emy and Charles Cordier highlights the ambiguities of the movement of animals associated with early *ex situ* conservation. Despite being presented as acts of “rescue” and “care,” their trade inherently involved violence, practices of extraction, and power imbalances between the Global South and the Global North.

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Endangered animals are rare creatures by definition. Nonetheless, many people have been able to see at least some of them in the flesh. After all, threatened species such as white rhinoceroses, mountain gorillas, and giant pandas draw large numbers of visitors to zoological gardens across the world.¹ Despite the fact that such animals only make up a small percentage of the total number of species that zoos exhibit, their captive breeding has come to serve as a crucial legitimizing mission for the zoo as an institution.² As a result, endangered animals, detached from their native habitats, circulate in globally administered breeding schemes and cater to global audiences.³

The focus of zoological gardens on endangered species is a relatively recent phenomenon. Their agenda of *ex situ* conservation, ubiquitous as it may be today, only really took off in the second half of the twentieth century. In order to take off, this agenda required that zoos obtain these endangered animals from the wild and then to generate knowledge on how to transport them, keep them alive, and acclimatize them to captivity. In the pivotal era of the mid-twentieth century, some animal-catchers and traders specifically catered to this demand and specialized entirely in the procurement of rare wildlife. Emy Cordier (1903–90) and Charles Courdier (1897–1994), a Swiss couple, were among the most celebrated of these new specialists.⁴ The Cordiers, and the zoos they worked with, legitimized the capture and trade of rare animals by invoking notions of conservation and science. Yet, participating in an “economy of rarity,” their business also proved extractive and violent, while creating (partial) ignorance about the animals they traded.

As such, the story of the Cordiers intersects with three scholarly discussions: the historiographies related to zoos, the production of (non-)knowledge, and conservation. The first of these—the literature dealing with the history of menageries and zoos—clearly shows that the allure of rarity is centuries old.⁵ Most of the existing zoo scholarship, however, fails to historicize the evolving notion of “rare animals” and does not analyze the changing practicalities of their capture and trade. Traditionally, zoo historians have indeed organized their stories around the metropolitan center, thus largely ignoring, in the words of Daniel Vandersommers, “the complex processes that brought animals to zoos in the first place.”⁶ The Cordiers, then, offer a good entry point to explore these processes of procurement, particularly in the case of rare animals.

This article, however, does not conceive of the animal-catcher as only a provider of animals but also as a mediator of knowledge about

those animals. Zoo historians, of course, have ventured into the history of knowledge but have mostly focused on scientific inquiry taking place in the well-controlled settings of the zoo itself.⁷ In contrast, animal-catchers like the Cordiers worked in the field and tried to assemble information about animals they would seldom see, and perhaps did not exist at all. Looking into this, the article touches on a broader theme that is receiving increasing attention among historians of knowledge: “non-knowledge,” or the “historical forms of not knowing and [the] . . . historical strategies of dealing with unknowns.”⁸ The activities of the Cordiers are particularly illustrative here. After all, Charles Cordier looked not just for animals hardly known to Western science but also for the ones that were not even on its radar. He ventured into so-called cryptozoology, the (pseudo)science that searches for and studies unknown and legendary animals, aiming to catch those creatures and monetize them in the economy of rarity.⁹ So far, historians of non-knowledge have hardly shown attention to the exotic animal trade. The case of the Cordiers underscores the extent to which this trade depended on the cultural appeal of “elusiveness” and highlights the limitations of the knowledge that accompanied animals to Western zoos.

Finally, the practices of the Cordiers relate directly to scholarly discussions about endangered animal conservation and the changing cultural and scientific meanings assigned to endangerment and extinction.¹⁰ Some scholars have pointed out how conservation of wild animals coincided with their commodification as “lively capital” and how conservationist practices of care coalesced with practices of violence.¹¹ Others have highlighted the intricacies of conservation knowledge and the difficulties of studying the absent, the elusive, and the extinct.¹² So far, however, these literatures have not engaged with the supply of endangered animals crucial to early *ex situ* conservation—like indeed the trade of the Cordiers.

Bringing these three lines of scholarship into conversation, this article uses the Cordiers to throw a light on the historical origins of *ex situ* conservation in a zoo context. Capitalizing on zoo reforms, Emy and Charles Cordier deftly inscribed their trade into the latter’s rhetoric of “discovery,” “care,” and “rescue.” As this article argues, however, their business equally perpetuated non-knowledge about animals, depended on violent power asymmetries, and involved highly extractive practices.

Networks, Projects, and Personae

Like many animal-catchers, Emy and Charles Cordier had irregular career trajectories, resulting in a geographically and institutionally complicated network. Charles started to work in the animal trade in 1924 when he was twenty-seven years old, leaving a job as a bank clerk in Zurich to collect birds in Brazil for Bruce Chapmann's London-based Livestock Emporium. He stayed in Brazil for most of the interwar years, married a Brazilian woman (left unnamed in the sources), and specialized in the parrot trade. After meeting the French pseudoaristocrat, bird collector, menagerie owner, and preservationist Jean Delacour in the late 1930s, he moved into more ambitious animal-catching expeditions.¹³ In 1937, he traveled through Guatemala for Delacour and, in 1939, led an expedition to French Indochina, bringing live mammals, birds, and reptiles for the Jardin des Plantes in Paris and the Zurich Zoo. Following the outbreak of the Second World War, Cordier relocated to California. After a brief stint as a bookkeeper in a chemical factory, he set up a new collecting trip to Costa Rica in 1942, supplying the zoos of Philadelphia and New York with rare birds. Not much later, the Bronx Zoo hired him as their regular "zoological collector." In the same period, he married Emy, a Swiss expatriate in New York with an interest in bird-rearing.¹⁴

Through their connection to the Bronx Zoo—one of the largest zoological gardens in the United States and the first to explicitly seek a conservation aura—the Cordiers gradually turned into celebrity figures.¹⁵ Their public visibility notably peaked after they led the much-mediatized New York Zoological Society expedition to the Belgian Congo (1947–49). Outlets such as *Life* magazine and the *New York Times* covered the expedition, and Emy was named ABC's "Woman of the Day."¹⁶ Capitalizing on their fame, the couple continued the animal-catching trade as freelancers, working mostly from South America. In 1953, Charles temporarily took a job as a bird curator at the Cleveland Zoo, but, in 1957, he and Emy left again for Congo, where they worked to provide animals for the wildlife film *Seigneurs de la Forêt*, an initiative under the patronage of the Belgian king Leopold III.¹⁷ After the film's shooting, they returned to the zoo trade—initially working from Belgian Congo and, later, from Peru. Throughout the 1960s and early 1970s, Charles oversaw a range of zoo collecting trips through South and Central America and the Caribbean. An unsuccessful expedition to Papua New Guinea

eventually brought financial ruin, and, in 1980, the elderly couple returned to Zurich, virtually penniless.¹⁸

That the career of the Cordiers ended in disillusion should not obscure the fact that at their prime they worked for the most reputable zoos in the world. Significantly, they did so in a period when many of these institutions were rethinking their role and public image by strategically presenting themselves as “Noah’s Arks” for endangered animals. This is of importance, because it opened up a niche in which, for a while at least, the Cordiers could flourish. Conversely, the zoos in question clearly depended on actors like the Cordiers to reorganize and rebrand their institutions.

World War II had left many zoological gardens—even old and prestigious ones—in a state of disarray. Particularly in Europe, they were confronted with ravaged infrastructures, imploded animal stocks, and disrupted supply lines, while simultaneously facing public criticism over animal welfare and connections to the commercial animal trade. To tackle the challenges, a small group of zoo directors assembled in 1946 to set up the International Union for Directors of Zoological Gardens (IUDZG, today’s World Association of Zoos and Aquariums [WAZA])—fostering collaboration between what the union’s first president, Armand Sunier, described as “bona fide zoos.” Many of the early discussions within the organization concerned the question of how such zoos could improve their standing with the public and the authorities. In these discussions, two lines of argument quickly became dominant. First, IUDZG members systematically stressed that their institutions should commit explicitly to “the protection of the world’s fauna.” Second, they actively sought legitimation in their zoos’ role as “scientific institutions.”¹⁹ Given that the Cordiers almost exclusively worked with IUDZG-affiliated zoological gardens, it is important to unpack these arguments a little further.

In the zoo world, the focus on fauna protection was altogether novel. While a few isolated zoological gardens (including the Bronx Zoo) had embraced a conservation agenda at the turn of the twentieth century, the 1940s and 1950s saw more widespread and coordinated efforts.²⁰ The IUDZG played a catalyzing role. Fauna protection figured prominently in the discussions of its biennial meetings, mobilizing several of its leading figures—including Sunier, Delacour, Walter van den Bergh (of the Antwerp Zoo), and Heini Hediger (of the Basel and later the Zurich Zoo). Zoological gardens, these men claimed, needed to

sever their links with commercial traders, reorient themselves toward the breeding of threatened species, and initiate internationally coordinated exchanges of zoo animals. While couched in idealistic language, this emphasis on breeding and exchange was at least partly motivated by the limited availability of animals resulting from war-disrupted supply lines. Simultaneously, it offered IUDZG zoos a possibility to put themselves in the market as serious conservationist institutions.²¹ This strategic repositioning opened a crucial market for the capture, acclimatization, and trade of endangered animals. To meet the demands of self-proclaimed conservationist zoos, the Cordiers specialized in supplying these animals, including umbrellabirds, ocellated turkeys, bongos, mountain gorillas, and Andean flamingos.

Alongside associating themselves with conservation, IUDZG members sought to link their work unambiguously to science. This legitimization built on an old discursive tradition, as, since at least the beginning of the nineteenth century, zoo directors fondly presented their institutions as sites of zoological research.²² New to the post-1945 period, however, was the idea that the management of the zoo should turn into a science itself. Under the name “zoo biology,” a discipline arose that sought to improve the care for captive animals through rational design of enclosures, selection of food, and veterinary monitoring.²³ Once again, IUDZG members played prominent roles. In 1942, Hediger published *Wildtiere in Gefangenschaft*, which, in its postwar English translation, gained repute as the bible of zoo biology.²⁴ Lee Crandall, curator at the Bronx Zoo and honorary member of the IUDZG, followed with the similarly influential *Management of Wild Mammals in Captivity* (1963).²⁵ Scientization shaped the work of the Cordiers, too. They closely worked with zoo biologists such as Hediger and Crandall, and, at least in outward communication, they made rational animal care a central aspect of their trade.²⁶

While the proponents of the “scientific zoo” generally sought to distance themselves from commercial animal traders, the Cordiers proved to be an exception. In fact, leading IUDZG members publicly associated the couple with their institutions. While doing so, they always framed the Cordiers as “experts,” not as “traders.” In 1948, for instance, the newsletter of the New York Zoological Society described Charles as “probably the most expert live-animal trapper in the world.”²⁷ In 1960, Hediger similarly praised him in the popular animal magazine *Das Tier* as “the internationally acclaimed specialist for the capture of rare and delicate exotic

animals.”²⁸ Emy, for her part, was typically represented as an “expert in the care and feeding of animals.”²⁹ Zoo directors drew on such images of expertise not only when addressing the general audience but also when writing letters of support to the officials that provided Charles with capturing permits. In 1964, for example, Van den Bergh wrote the Consul of Bolivia to indicate that Cordier offered “the highest services to the zoological sciences” while practicing his profession of “tracking and acclimatizing animals *pour l’art*.”³⁰ Of course, such boundary drawing between the “scientific” and the “commercial” mimicked the strategy that IUDZG-affiliated institutions had used to dissociate “bona fide zoos” from “bad” ones, thus obscuring the actual commercial transactions on which the former continued to depend.

Drawing on the resources of IUDZG-affiliated zoos, Charles and Emy marketed their business through carefully crafted public personae. These personae were highly gendered. Narratives about Charles clearly fit in the traditionally masculine rhetoric of expeditions. As a rule, his letters and articles, as well as the news stories others devoted to him, referenced the well-worn trope of “suffering for science.”³¹ An emblematic, oft-recited story dramatizing such suffering involved Charles’s quest to catch the Congo peacock. This elusive species, living scattered across the Congolese lowland forests, was only “discovered” by Western science in the late 1930s, and accounts of Charles trying to capture the “first” living individual systematically foregrounded the physical trials of the operation. These stories particularly zoomed in on a field expedition during which he broke his leg and awaited help for twenty-two hours, lying on his back in “a foul black swamp.”³² Charles’s working conditions, it was stressed elsewhere, involved “biting flies, mosquitoes, thorns, *bête rouge* and muddy drinking water.”³³

Stories about Emy, however, situated her in a sphere of feminine care and domesticity. In explicit contrast to Charles’s job to “roam far and wide,” hers was described as a “less exciting but equally important” succession of “animal housekeeping chores.”³⁴ Articles quoted from letters in which she recounted her “pleasant moments with pet animals during work-filled days.”³⁵ Pictures showed her handfeeding a tapir or protectively holding a baby gorilla.³⁶ Taken together, Charles’s and Emy’s gendered personae strategically embodied a double expertise: to heroically trace rare animals and meticulously care for them once caught. It was an image important for promoting their business as well as the aura of the zoos they worked for.

Value in Rarity

A crucial category in descriptions of the Cordiers and their expertise was the “rarity” of the animals they tracked and cared for. Yet, while crucial, the notion of rarity was not self-evident and could have various meanings. In the correspondence between Charles and zoo directors, references to particular animals being rare mostly implied their numbers were limited in Western zoo collections. This was considered to make the animals in question particularly attractive as objects of prestige and wonder and, thus, increased their price.³⁷ In their outward communication, the zoos with which the Cordiers worked systematically foregrounded “first timers”: the first animals of a species to be held by a zoo (fig. 1).³⁸ The Congo peacock provides a good example. In 1948, the New York Zoological Society’s newsletter wrote ecstatically about their capture: “No zoological garden has ever exhibited one, few white men have ever seen one alive, nobody knew it existed until barely twelve years ago. And now the New York Zoological Society has it, alive and healthy and voracious!”³⁹ Such value in rarity was, of course, nothing new. It had been central to the establishment of curiosity cabinets, natural history collections, and menageries since at least the fifteenth century.⁴⁰ In this respect, the trade of the Cordiers continued a very old tradition.

Yet, there was also a second, more novel value in rarity. In their newly sought role as conservation institutions, zoos became interested in animals that were rare *in the wild*. As indicated, breeding with such animals to avert extinction grew into a central ambition of IUDZG-affiliated zoos in the post–World War II period.⁴¹ Increasingly, “firsts” of animals born in captivity mattered, too.⁴² In a late colonial context, zoo directors reasoned that endangered species would soon vanish in their native habitat and could only be rescued through captive breeding programs.⁴³ The Congo peacock is illustrative once again. In 1960, Van den Bergh wrote Cordier to bring “the maximum of couples” to Europe in order to “save the species at all cost.”⁴⁴ Such “saving” became a matter of public reputation. After a while, Van den Bergh even started to demand first choice from Cordier’s captures, because “the affair of the Congo peacock has cost too much money for our Society not to possess the benefit of the prestige for having rescued the species.”⁴⁵ The focus on breeding for conservation altered the economy of rarity, at least partially. When Cordier tried to sell Van den Bergh a male



Figure 1. Charles Cordier posing with a yapok, or water opossum, which the journal *Animal Kingdom* stressed in 1947 was “a ‘first time’ mammal, which he brought back from the Costa Rican jungle” (Charles Cordier, “A Cargo of Rarities from Costa Rica,” *Animal Kingdom* 50 [1947]: 170). Credit: Image courtesy of the Wildlife Conservation Society, BZ_1947-09-03 / WCS.

horned curassow (an endangered Bolivian bird species) in 1972, the latter was explicit in his refusal: “A male on its own is not interesting. With rare species the ultimate purpose is breeding. Hence, we also need a female. Importing a male just for having a zoological rarity makes no sense.”⁴⁶ While zoos certainly continued to pride themselves on possessing rare species, such possession was increasingly tied to reproduction.

Value in rarity was a layered phenomenon. The economic was always entangled with the symbolic and the latter with personal and institutional pride. In a letter to Charles with instructions for his Congo expedition, Crandall stressed that nothing was as important as bringing back Congo peacocks, since these had “caught the public fancy though



Figure 2. Charles and Emy Cordier showing a Congo peacock at a press moment with the president of the New York Zoological Society, Fairfield Osborn, in 1949. Credit: Image courtesy of the Wildlife Conservation Society, BZ_1949-06-23.

our publicity.” Crandall accepted that the “stock” Cordier could collect might not cover the costs of the expedition but believed public interest would ultimately make up for that.⁴⁷ Although Cordier ended up supplementing his collection for New York with more common species, rarities such as the Congo peacock made up its heart (fig. 2). His price lists show that expensive rare animals continued to be crucial to his business model for several years to come.⁴⁸ Simultaneously, his ability to track the most elusive mammals and birds became a crucial part of his persona in popular magazines, while his letters show the extent to which he internalized the associated ideals of Western discovery.⁴⁹ In 1965, he wrote to Van den Bergh about his eagerness to “rediscover” the horned curassow, of which hides had been collected by American naturalists in the 1930s, but which had remained “unseen” since. Cordier believed that, after a series of setbacks, catching horned curassows could again “give some meaning to . . . [his] existence.”⁵⁰ The economy of rarity was driven as much by honor as by money.

Zoo directors strategically inscribed Cordier’s rare animal trade in narratives of conservation. Charles’s letters, however, show that this

did not stop him from making “liberal use” of permits, circumventing protection laws, and tracing legal loopholes.⁵¹ He did so openly—happily informing zoo directors when he found places where “there was no fauna protection to speak of.”⁵² When operating from regions where such protection did exist, the same zoo directors supported Cordier’s often destructive catching expeditions by using conservationist arguments. In 1963, for instance, Van den Bergh wrote to the Peruvian Minister of Agriculture to lobby for catching permits, explicitly stressing that, in the execution of his work, Cordier always had “the conservation of nature at heart.”⁵³

By that point, the latter’s conservationist reputation was certainly no longer spotless. Only a year before, his trade in Congolese mountain gorillas had ended in controversy. The military mutiny and civil war in the wake of Congolese independence made Cordier leave the country for Uganda in 1961, taking ten gorillas and leaving ten others in his base camp.⁵⁴ Not much later, the new Congolese Minister of Agriculture, Jean-Chrysostome Weregemere, addressed his international contacts to convince them the animals had been caught illegally and at a high cost of life (with twelve gorillas dying during the catching operation).⁵⁵ In response, the president of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Jean Baer, wrote his counterpart at the IUDZG, George Mottershead, to ensure no market was offered to the animals. In his letter, Baer stressed the bleak aspects of the economy of rarity: “Uncontrolled and illicit capture of such species, whose value is of course enhanced by the threat to their continued existence, results in proportionally greater risks taken in the field.”⁵⁶ Mottershead duly passed the message to the IUDZG members. Interestingly, however, many of the latter sided with Cordier. Personal friends like Ernst Lang (of the Basel Zoo) and Van den Bergh agitated against the boycott, and Cordier’s gorillas did end up in zoos across the world, with several of them dying quickly after their arrival.⁵⁷ Afterward, the Cordiers did not return to Congo, but their trade would continue for some twenty-odd years, which speaks to the longevity of the practices through which they made value out of rarity.⁵⁸

Mediating Knowledge, Exerting Power

It was not only animals that were the subject of trade in the economy of rarity. Knowledge about those animals was traded, too, and was

equally hard to come by. Fundamental aspects of the biology of such animals remained unknown to traders and zookeepers, and practical knowledge of how to efficiently catch, feed, and transport them was notoriously difficult to obtain. As a node in the network between metropolitan zoos and local actors in the field, the Cordiers became important mediators of both knowledge of and ignorance about rare animals.

Zoo professionals clearly provided Charles Cordier with important input. They sent him books to identify the animals he caught, provided him with information on vitamins, drugs, and animal feed, and informed him about novel catching technologies such as tranquilizer guns.⁵⁹ Cordier, for his part, sent zookeepers much valued “experimental” information on how their metropolitan knowledge translated into practice. His “experiments” mostly consisted of trying out various techniques of catching, feeding, and transporting animals, with the dependent variable being the number of animal deaths. Often, the results of such experiments were dramatic. The chasing of bongos, for instance, systematically led to death within forty-eight hours after capture, presumably due to shock.⁶⁰ At the instigation of Western zoo directors, Cordier shifted to shooting them with a tranquilizer gun, but this proved equally problematic. In 1959, he could only report to Hediger that he had “tranquilized 3 Bongos to death!”⁶¹ Animal transport posed similar challenges. By Cordier’s own account, flamingo transportations (both by ship and plane) initially resulted in a 75 percent death rate. In response, he carried out tests at his home, hanging flamingos in a plastic market bag within a wooden box. He informed the West Berlin Zoo director Heinz-Georg Klös that the animals fell and, because of the water in the box, became too heavy to stand up, but would recover later.⁶² It was only one of the many tests the Cordiers resorted to in order to optimize their trade. They compared traps to check the extent to which these inflicted wounds; they tried out various feed to see what the animals would accept; and they looked into different captive regimes to tame them.⁶³ Such knowledge then fed back into the zoo. Regularly, Charles continued to advise zookeepers on how to treat his animals after arrival.⁶⁴ The continued high death rates, however, show that much remained unknown.

While knowledge transfers with metropolitan zookeepers were important in the economy of rarity, they were not as crucial as exchanges with informants on the ground. For his trade practices, Charles relied heavily on information from previous expedition leaders, colonial



Figure 3. Transactions: Charles Cordier, two Yuracaré hunters, two razor-billed curassows, and the aluminium pot against which the Swiss traded the animals. Credit: Image courtesy of the Wildlife Conservation Society, taken from Charles Cordier, "The Quest for the Horned Curassow," *Animal Kingdom* 74 (1971): 10.

officials, and local amateur animal breeders.⁶⁵ Furthermore, he crucially depended on the knowledge of indigenous hunters for actually finding and catching the elusive animals he traded in (fig. 3). Charles particularly sought out folk knowledge among hunter-gatherer and fishing communities such as the Twa ("Pygmies") in Congo or the Yuracaré and Murato in Bolivia.⁶⁶ Typically, he asked around in villages, sometimes working with postcard images, to trace particular species, and he took extensive notes on indigenous animal trapping techniques.⁶⁷ In interacting with locals, he worked with go-betweens, to whom he delegated much of the work. During his first Congo expedition, he heavily relied on his "assistant-collector" Augustin Mwarabu, a former carpenter whom he praised for his knowledge of both Lingala and

Swahili.⁶⁸ In Bolivia, he worked with a war veteran named Chaco, who spoke Spanish, Quechua, and Aymara.⁶⁹ Occasionally, Charles took part in animal captures himself, but he was virtually always accompanied by local hunters. In some special cases, including gorilla catching expeditions, he supervised up to two hundred workers in the field.⁷⁰ More often, however, he stayed put in the base camp, awaiting hunters to bring in his rarities. In his interactions with those hunters, Charles particularly sought practical knowledge enabling the tracking, capture, and feeding of animals. Only very occasionally did he gather information on their natural behavior or ecological relationships, and when he did, a lot was lost in translation. The animals that traveled to Western zoos thus remained “unknown” entities in various respects. The rare animal trade produced ignorance as much as knowledge.⁷¹

The trade of the Cordiers, and the (non-)knowledge it produced, was always shaped by asymmetrical power relations. Charles’s letters tended to stress his own powerlessness—working in the periphery, perpetually short of money, struggling with unhelpful authorities, climatic challenges, and malfunctioning equipment.⁷² In relation to local hunters, however, his position was undoubtedly one of power. This stands out most clearly in the colonial context in which he operated in Congo. During the New York Zoological Society expedition, Charles relied on the colonial hierarchy’s “sector chiefs” and (lower-ranked) “capitas” to provide him with forced or underpaid laborers, who were often subject to violence.⁷³ In his letters to New York, Cordier testified of state-provided prisoners having to weed his base camp, tied to each other by ropes.⁷⁴ Regularly, he wrote about sector chiefs ordering the whipping of his hunters whose behavior failed to live up to his expectations. “Voluntary cooperation,” Cordier explained in October 1948, “simply does not exist.”⁷⁵

Of course, not all places where the Cordiers worked offered the same power relations. In Latin America, they did not rely on forced labor, but even then their hunters worked in precarious conditions. While Charles occasionally prided himself on his respect for indigenous knowledge, his interactions with local actors were characterized by paternalism and conflict.⁷⁶ He often wrote disparagingly about his hunters’ presumed laziness and unreliability and dwelled on what he saw as their destructive relationship with nature, both in Latin America and Central Africa. In Bolivia, he strongly criticized large-scale indigenous exploitation of rare flamingo species, which he believed would

lead to their extinction.⁷⁷ In Congo, he predicted independence would result in a complete slaughter of gorillas, playing into wider fears among European conservationists that decolonization was to trigger chaos and environmental catastrophe.⁷⁸ Such dystopian images of indigenous destruction clearly served to legitimize his own trade as a form of rescue. Simultaneously, Charles's letters show that the exploitative dimension of such rescue was not lost on him either. After having fled from Congo, he wrote Van den Bergh in 1961 about his further plans: "Once my truck is back in perfect shape I go back to the Congo to LOOT it of as many mountain gorillas as is feasible & then clear out."⁷⁹ It was a recognition—albeit a cynical one—of the extractive logic of his trade. Written down at a moment of Congo's formal independence, the passage is also indicative of the ways colonial legacies affected (and would continue to affect) both human and nonhuman actors.⁸⁰

Cryptozoology, or Trading the Unknown

Metaphorical border zones figured prominently in the rhetoric that surrounded the economy of rarity. These metaphorical zones encompassed the physical borders of (Western) "civilization" where the rarities in question were caught, but also the intellectual borders of (Western) knowledge. Despite his reputation as an expert, Charles Cordier indeed had to admit that the creatures he sought often completely eluded him. "Sometimes," he wrote in 1947, "the collector begins to wonder if the birds he is seeking really exist, so elusive are the rarest specimens."⁸¹ This elusiveness, of course, was exactly what made them culturally attractive and economically valuable. As a consequence, Cordier's ultimate ambition was to find animals that hitherto had remained completely unknown to Western science. In the early 1960s, his animal-catching practices thus spilled over into cryptozoology. In many respects, the ideas and practices of his cryptozoological work just extended those of his animal trade.

Cordier became acquainted with cryptozoology in 1960, when a herpetologist passed him Bernard Heuvelmans's *Sur la piste des bêtes ignorées* (later translated as *On the Track of Unknown Animals*).⁸² The book, published in 1955, is often seen as the bible of cryptozoological research (fig. 4). Heuvelmans was a science fiction enthusiast and zoologist trained at the University of Brussels, who, after a career as a jazz singer in 1940s Paris, started to publish popular articles on unknown,



Figure 4. The allure of the elusive: Bernard Heuvelmans's two-volume *Sur la piste des bêtes ignorées* (1955). Credit: Photo of covers by author.

ignored, and disappeared animals.⁸³ *Sur la piste* was his first book-length publication on the topic, assembling evidence for the existence of large mythical creatures such as the abominable snowman and the sea serpent. Heuvelmans argued that it was very possible for such creatures to have eluded Western scientists for centuries. As a whole range of large animals (like the giant panda, but also the Congo peacock) had only been recently discovered, he believed that many more could still be tracked down.⁸⁴ Cordier read it all with approval. In fact, he had several of those mythical animals on his radar already.

In 1958, Cordier first wrote to Van den Bergh about “a mysterious beast”—a predator the size of a dog—that roamed the Kasai region and was “described in no book.” Van den Bergh was intrigued, putting an exclamation mark in the margin.⁸⁵ Not much later, Cordier came with more. He collected testimonies about an animal that locals described as “Chenuzi” and which he referred to as a “fantasy creature,” “ghost animal,” and “siren.” It was presumably long-haired, combined feet with a fish tail, and could discharge electric shocks. Importantly, his trusted assistant Mwarabu claimed to have seen one himself.⁸⁶ To Klös, Cordier insisted he was not going mad but rather was on the verge of

a great discovery.⁸⁷ Other theories ensued. In spring 1960, Cordier believed he was closing in on two different species of unknown “ape-men.” The first one, known locally as “Kakundakari” could, according to Cordier, be associated with the *Congopithecus* in Heuvelmans’s book. This small primate with a humanlike face and grayish fur presumably walked upright, slept in caves, ate crustaceans, and was able to count to ten. The second one, named “Kikumba” or “Apamandi,” was allegedly a large and smelly humanlike creature, eating anything from antelopes to larvae, climbing trees to steal bee nests, and known for its loud nocturnal howling. Cordier explained it all extensively in letters to the zoo directors he traded with.⁸⁸

To confirm the creatures’ existence, Cordier tracked down European engineers, doctors, and missionaries, who claimed to have seen or even possessed his ghost animals. Yet, as for his animal trade activities more generally, he ultimately relied most on information of indigenous people. In April 1960, a delegation of indigenous women brought Cordier to a cave where he saw a “clear footprint” of what he believed to be a Kakundakari. Not much later, he believed he had found “fresh traces” of the Kikumba.⁸⁹ To Van den Bergh he wrote jubilantly that he would succeed in finding both creatures, because, unlike others he did “not see the natives as imbeciles.”⁹⁰ He called in his Congo peacock specialists to hunt the Kakundakari and had them put bait out at caves. Increased postindependence violence, however, forced him to abort the mission.⁹¹ Despite the failure, Cordier did manage to publish his cryptozoological theories in *Genus*, a journal for population sciences and, later, in Van den Bergh’s *Zoo Magazine*.⁹² In 1963, then, he left for Peru in the hope of tracing six birds described by the Incas yet unknown to modern science. This project, which did not bring the hoped-for results, proved to be the last of his cryptozoological endeavors.⁹³

For Cordier himself, cryptozoological practice was hardly distinguishable from his animal-catching business. After all, he sought to integrate unknown animals fully in the economy of rarity. The ghost animals he chased, so he stressed in his article in *Genus*, had been “very, very rare.”⁹⁴ And like Congo peacocks and mountain gorillas, he anticipated turning them into marketable creatures. Writing to Van den Bergh about the Chenuzi in March 1960, Cordier was hopeful: “Some sensation we are going to have & a financial shot in the arm.”⁹⁵ As buyers for the cryptozoological creatures, he was thinking of his regular trading

partners. In May 1960, he promised Van den Bergh the first choice from prospective ape-men captures: "There is not a doubt that these hominids exist, and the first one I catch will be for you!" Van den Bergh indeed showed clear enthusiasm, and he was not the only zoo director to do so.⁹⁶ Hediger covered the story excitedly in *Das Tier*: "[Cordier's] goal, which he will doubtlessly pursue with his characteristic energy and tenacity, is, of course, to bring the new great apes to Europe alive." According to Hediger, "zoological gardens across the world" followed the developments "with burning interest."⁹⁷ Men such as Van den Bergh and Hediger indeed proved eager to tap into the sensations promised by cryptozoology. The latter extended (and arguably emboldened) the central desire driving the economy of rarity—the desire to trace and market rare resources from along the perceived frontiers of science and civilization. While the transfer of wild-caught rare animals to zoos ironically lessened the appeal of elusiveness these creatures held, cryptozoology shifted the desire to ever-new discoveries.

The practical, rhetorical, and symbolic crossovers between zoo practice and cryptozoology were many. Heuvelmans himself modeled his cryptozoological imaginaries after examples set by scientific zoos. *Sur la piste des bêtes ignorées* discussed sensational stories of how zoos had tracked and imported hitherto little-known animals: the pygmy chimpanzee brought to Antwerp, the kouprey to Vincennes Zoo in Paris, the giant panda to the Brookfield Zoo in Chicago. Heuvelmans, furthermore, explicitly referenced traders like Carl Hagenbeck and his animal-catcher Hans Schomburgk as good sources of cryptozoological information. Cordier's own name eventually made it to new editions of *Sur la piste* for his "appreciable additional argumentation to the stories of furry sprites." And the introduction to the book's English translation, published in 1958, was written by yet another exotic animal trader: the Brit Gerald Durrell.⁹⁸ In 1959, the latter went on to found the Jersey Zoological Park, which quickly became one of the world's foremost sites for the breeding of endangered species, including Congo peacocks.⁹⁹ The conservationist logic mobilized by Durrell was not lost on Heuvelmans himself either. In *Sur la piste* he made a call to the IUCN to extend their protection measures to "the creatures which are still unknown to science."¹⁰⁰ The rhetoric was very similar to that of the conservationist zoo.

On the ground, however, chasing ghosts did not fit easily with the logic of protection. Writing about the Kakundakari to Van den Bergh,

Cordier was straightforward: “I think we will have to kill the . . . specimen as it is too large and vagrant to be cornered with nets.”¹⁰¹ The still unseen and purportedly very rare hominid was to be shot, and its body brought to Europe. It speaks to the ways in which the economy of rarity—of known as well as unknown creatures—was extractive and violent.

Conclusion

In February 1984, Charles Cordier—then eighty-six years old—wrote a letter to the new director of the Antwerp Zoo, Frederic Daman. He had heard about recent captures of Congo peacocks in Zaire that had gone wrong and offered his services to supervise the hunters on site.¹⁰² With his old contacts at the zoo gone, however, Cordier’s proposal fell on stony ground. An internal memo of the board of directors stressed that Antwerp had “no commitment nor obligation towards him,” and his offer was refused.¹⁰³ This cold shoulder was partially due to a generational shift in social networks. At the same time, it was also indicative of a more general change in the position of animal-catchers in the international zoo world.

From the 1960s onward, scientific zoos increasingly argued that captive breeding would allow them to phase out the intake of animals from the wild. While still an object of heroic storylines in zoo magazines in the 1940s and 1950s, the capture of rare animals gradually became an embarrassment. In 1962, the *International Zoo Yearbook*—an important mouthpiece of self-declared bona fide zoos—dropped the “international list of animal dealers” from its sections.¹⁰⁴ In the following decade, new international trade legislation, particularly the Washington Convention on the International Trade of Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora (1973) complicated the import of wild-caught animals. As a result, several players severed their links with traders, including expert ones such as the Cordiers.¹⁰⁵ From the 1980s onward, zoos continued to find “fresh blood” for their breeding programs, but they mostly did so by acquiring endangered animals confiscated by customs, or through direct so-called conservation agreements with foreign governments. The economy of rarity took partially new forms.¹⁰⁶

Still, to this day, zoos work with the legacy of animal transfers stemming from trade like that of the Cordiers. This trade had been rife with ambiguities. The Cordiers provided prestigious zoos with endangered

animals in order to breed them, but this also produced injury, trauma, and death. Working from (post)colonial border zones, their position was one of both marginality and power. Their trade exploited local knowledge and skill, often violently so, and, despite tapping into indigenous knowledge, the rare animals they sought continued to be elusive. In some cases, the very existence of the animals remained in doubt, a fact that only heightened their appeal. In other cases, specimens could actually be brought from the Global South to the Global North, but even then the transported creatures remained to a large extent unknown, mysterious, and brittle.

Over recent decades, self-proclaimed bona fide zoos have reorganized the economy of rarity, making rare animals subject to increasingly strict regimes of monitored breeding and transnational exchange. The history of the Cordiers, however, reminds us of the origins of the animals that circulate within those regimes, the power dynamics that made their transfer to zoos possible, and the extent to which this transfer produced ignorance as much as knowledge. On a more general level, it shows how the cultural fascination for a natural world beyond human observation and control has ironically fueled modernist projects to make that same natural world observable and controllable. Occasionally, such projects even reached into the world of myths and legends.

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Notes

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1. In a survey from the Durrell Wildlife Park in Jersey, visitors indicated “the most desirable trait for a zoo animal is that it should be ‘endangered.’” Neil Carr, “Ideal Animals and Animal Traits for Zoos: General Public Perspectives,” *Tourism Management* 57 (2016): 37–44.
2. Todd Bayma, “Rational Myth Making and Environment Shaping: The Transformation of the Zoo,” *Sociological Quarterly* 53 (2012): 116–41.
3. Irus Braverman, *Zooland: The Institution of Captivity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013), 111–85.
4. So far, the Cordiers have not been the object of much scholarly discussion. The fellow animal-catcher Lars Lepperhoff has mostly memorialized their work in hagiographic tones. Yet, Violette Pouillard has—in a wider history of zoos and animal suffering—written more critically about the high mortality associated with their trade, as well as Charles’s tendency to evade preservation laws. Lars Lepperhoff, *Der Ruf des Kongopfaus: Charles und Emy Cordier - den Tieren auf der Spur* (Erlangen: Filander Verlag, 2009); Violette Pouillard, *Histoire des zoos par les animaux. Contrôle, impérialisme, conservation* (Cheyzérieu: Champvallon, 2019), 386–92.
5. See, e.g., Harriet Ritvo, *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987); Éric Baratay and Elisabeth Hardouin-Fugier, *Zoo: A History of Zoological Gardens in the West* (London: Reaktion Books, 2004); Ian Jared Miller, *The Nature of the Beasts: Empire and Exhibition at the Tokyo Imperial Zoo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013); Andrew Flack, *The Wild Within: Histories of a Landmark British Zoo* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2018).
6. Daniel Vandersommers, “Narrating Animal History from the Crag: A Turn-of-the-Century Tale about Mountain Sheep, Resistance and a Nation,” *Journal of American Studies* 51 (2017): 775.
7. For example, Lynn K. Nyhart, *Modern Nature: The Rise of the Biological Perspective in Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 79–124; Daniel Vandersommers, “Failed Zoo Experiments: Primatology, Aeronotics, and the Animality of ‘Modern’ Science, 1891–1903,” in *Zoo Studies: A New Humanities*, ed. Tracy McDonald and Daniel Vandersommers (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2018), 65–92; Miquell Carandell and Oliver Hochadel, eds., “Science at the Zoo: Producing Knowledge about Exotic Animals,” special issue, *Centaureus: Journal of the European Society for the History of Science* 64 (2022).
8. Lukas M. Verburgt, “The History of Knowledge and the Future History of Ignorance,” *KNOW: A Journal on the Formation of Knowledge* 4 (2020): 8. More specifically about environmental non-knowledge, see Frank Uekötter and Uwe Lübken, eds., *Managing the Unknown: Essays on Environmental Ignorance* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2014).
9. Katja Jylkka, “Speculating Science: Nature, Narrative, and the Cryptozoological Imagination” (PhD diss., University of California, Davis, 2019).
10. Mark V. Barrow, *Nature’s Ghosts: Confronting Extinction from the Age of Jefferson to the Age of Ecology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Ursula K.

- Heise, *Imagining Extinction: The Cultural Meanings of Endangered Species* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).
11. Regarding the first point, see Maan Barua, "Affective Economies, Pandas, and the Atmospheric Politics of Lively Capital," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 45 (2020): 678–92; Rosemary-Claire Collard, *Animal Traffic: Lively Capital in the Global Exotic Pet Trade* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2020). Regarding the second, see Thom Van Dooren, "A Day with Crows: Rarity, Nativity and the Violent-Care of Conservation," *Animal Studies Journal* 4 (2015): 1–28; Krithika Srinivasan and Rajesh Kasturirangan, "Violent Love: Conservation and Invasive Alien Species," in *The Palgrave International Handbook of Animal Abuse Studies*, ed. Jennifer Maher, Harriet Pierpoint, and Piers Beirne (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 433–52.
 12. Dolly Jørgensen, "Presence of Absence, Absence of Presence, and Extinction Narratives," in *Nature, Temporality and Environmental Management: Scandinavian and Australian Perspectives on Peoples and Landscapes*, ed. Lesley Head et al. (London: Routledge, 2016), 45–58; Alexandra Hui, "Listening to Extinction: Early Conservation Radio Sounds and the Silences of Species," *American Historical Review* 126 (2021): 1371–95; Whitney Barlow Robles, "The Rattlesnake and the Hibernaculum: Animals, Ignorance and Extinction in the Early American Underworld," *William and Mary Quarterly* 78 (2021): 3–44.
 13. On Delacour, see Jean Delacour, *The Living Air: The Memoirs of an Ornithologist* (London: Country Life Limited, 1966).
 14. Rene E. Honegger, "Charles Cordier, 1897–1994," *Der Zoologische Garten* 65 (1995): 200–206; Georg-Heinz Klös, "Tierfänger und Grosstierhändler: Erinnerungen eines alten Tiergärtner," *Bongo-Berlin* 35 (2005): 7–42. Specifically on Emy, see Emy Cordier, untitled autobiographical manuscript, Archives of the Zoological Garden of Berlin [hereafter, AZGB].
 15. On the Bronx Zoo, see Gregg Mitman, "When Nature Is the Zoo: Vision and Power in the Art and Science of Natural History," *Osiris* 11 (January 22, 1996): 117–43; Barrow, *Nature's Ghosts*, 108–24.
 16. Emy Cordier to Eleanor Roosevelt, September 8, 1949, Wildlife Conservation Society, Library and Archives, New York [hereafter, WCS], 1019-AO2310_B1F8.
 17. On the film, see Patricia Van Schuylenbergh, "Entre science et spectacle: *Seigneurs de La Forêt*, le film initié par Léopold III," *Muséum Dynasticum*, 2000, 17–23.
 18. Honegger, "Charles Cordier, 1897–1994"; Klös, "Tierfänger und Grosstierhändler."
 19. "Statuts de l'Union internationale de directeurs de jardins zoologiques," n.p., n.d.; "Procès-verbal de la conférences des directeurs de jardins-zoologiques," Rotterdam, September 23–25, 1946, both in Felixarchief, Antwerp Koninklijke Maatschappij voor Dierkunde van Antwerpen [hereafter, KMDA], C 1.4.1, 1 no. 2839 International Union for Directors of Zoological Gardens [hereafter, IUDZG]. On the history of the IUDZG, see Laura Penn, Markus Gusset, and Gerald Dick, *77 Years: The History and Evolution of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums*,

- 1935–2012 (Gland: World Association of Zoos and Aquariums, 2012). On the war impact for zoos, see John M. Kinder, “Zoo Animals and Modern War: Captive Casualties, Patriotic Citizens and Good Soldiers,” in *Animals and War*, ed. Ryan Hediger (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 45–75. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.
20. Pouillard, *Histoire des zoos par les animaux*, 381–82; Raf De Bont, *Nature’s Diplomats: Science, Internationalism, and Preservation, 1920–1960* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2021), 71–74.
 21. “Procès-verbal de la conférence des directeurs de jardins-zoologiques,” Rotterdam, September 23–25, 1946. “Programme de la réunion internationale des directeurs de jardins-zoologiques,” Basel, September 8–10, 1947; “Procès-verbal de l’Union des directeurs des jardins zoologiques,” Paris, June 28–July 3, 1948; Walter van den Bergh, untitled draft, London, 1950, all in KMDA, C 1.4.1, 1 nos. 2839–40 IUDZG.
 22. Oliver Hochadel, “Science at the Zoo: An Introduction,” in Carandell and Hochadel, “Science at the Zoo,” special issue, *Centaurus: Journal of the European Society for the History of Science* 64 (2022): 561–90.
 23. Matthew Chrulwew, “My Place, My Duty: Zoo Biology as Field Philosophy in the Work of Heini Hediger,” *Parallax* 24 (October 2, 2018): 480–500.
 24. Heini Hediger, *Wildtiere in Gefangenschaft: Ein Grundriss der Tiergartenbiologie* (Basel: Benno Schwabe, 1942).
 25. Lee S. Crandall, *Management of Wild Mammals in Captivity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964).
 26. For instance, Emy Cordier, “Keeping House for Animals in Ecuador,” *Animal Kingdom* 53 (1952): 118–21; Charles Cordier, “A Collector Tells: How to Capture Ant-Trushes,” *Animal Kingdom* 57 (1954): 156–59.
 27. “Want to Go to the Congo?,” *New York Zoological Society’s Newsletter*, no. 1, WCS, 1019-AO2312_B6F2(1).
 28. Heini Hediger, “Auf der Spur eines neuen Menschenaffen,” *Das Tier* 1 (1960): 49.
 29. Information Service, release October 10, 1947, WCS, 1019-AO2312_B1F7.
 30. Van den Bergh to Eduardo Stappaerts, December 4, 1964, KMDA, C 4.4.3, 1 no. 2844.
 31. See Rebecca Herzig, *Suffering for Science: Reason and Sacrifice in Modern America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005).
 32. “Hazards of Animal Collecting,” *New York Zoological Society’s Newsletter*, no. 3, WCS, 1019-AO2312_B6F2(1).
 33. Cordier, “A Collector Tells,” 156.
 34. The quote comes from the lead-in to Cordier, “Keeping House for Animals in Ecuador,” 51.
 35. “Further Adventures of Charles Cordier,” *Animal Kingdom* 52 (1949): 29.
 36. Cordier, “Keeping House for Animals in Ecuador,” 54; Walter van den Bergh, “D’importants arrivages d’animaux du Congo Belge et d’Amérique du Sud sont venus enrichir nos Collections,” *Zoo Magazine* 23 (1958): 93.

37. For instance, Cordier to Klös, August 14, 1961, and April 6, 1962, AZGB, Zoologische Gärten und Grössere Tierhandlungen, O 1/2/138–43; Charles Cordier, “Betrachtungen über den Kongo-Pfau (*Afropavo Congensis*),” *Gefiederte Welt* 10 (1959): 185.
38. Charles Cordier, “Our Belgian Congo Expedition Comes Home,” *Animal Kingdom* 52 (1949): 103–7.
39. “First *Afropavo* Captured,” *New York Zoological Society’s Newsletter*, no. 1, WCS, 1019-AO2312_B6F2(1).
40. For instance, Paula Findlen, *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting, and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Florike Egmond, “European Exchanges and Communities,” in *Worlds of Natural History*, ed. Helen Anne Curry et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 78–93.
41. Walter van den Bergh, “The Zoological Garden—Noah’s Ark of Future Generations,” *International Zoo Yearbook* 4 (1963): 61–65; Crandall, *Management of Wild Mammals*, vii; Heini Hediger, *Mensch Und Tier Im Zoo: Tiergartenbiologie* (Zurich: Rüschlikon, 1965), 296–97.
42. This is clear in both local zoo journals (like the *Antwerp Zoo Magazine*) and transnational outlets (like *Der Zoologische Garten* and the *International Zoo Yearbook*).
43. This fit wider fears within international conservation circles. See John M. Kinder, “‘Our Faunal Defense in Africa’: Imperial Survivalism, Anglo-American Conservation, and African Independence in the Twentieth Century,” *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 23 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.1353/cch.2022.0026>.
44. Van den Bergh to Cordier, May 1, 1960, KMDA, C. 4.4.3, 1 no. 2843.
45. Van den Bergh to Cordier, June 29, 1961, KMDA, C. 4.4.3, 1 no. 2843.
46. Van den Bergh to Cordier, September 5, 1972, KMDA, C. 4.4.3, 1 no. 2845.
47. Crandall to Cordier, February 7 and March 31, 1949, WCS, 1019-AO2306_B1F6.
48. In a 1959 price list, the most expensive animals were mountain gorillas (6,000 francs), bongos (5,250 francs), and female Congo peacocks (750 francs). Price list, November 1959, AZGB, Zoologische Gärten und Grössere Tierhandlungen, O 1/2/132.
49. See, e.g., Charles Cordier, “The Umbrella Bird Comes to the Zoo,” *Animal Kingdom* 46 (1943): 3–10; Charles Cordier, “Collecting the Ocellated Turkey,” *Aviculture* 13 (1943): 61–71; Charles Cordier, “A Cargo of Rarities from Costa Rica,” *Animal Kingdom* 50 (1947): 61–71; “Further Adventures of Charles Cordier”; Charles Cordier, “Flamingos in Bolivien,” *Freunde Kölner Zoo* 11 (1968): 13–16.
50. Cordier to Van den Bergh, December 7, 1965, KMDA, C. 4.4.3, 1 no. 2844.
51. For example, Cordier to Crandall, February 14, 1948, and May 5, 1949, WCS, 1019-AO2306_B1F6; Cordier to Van den Bergh, July 25, 1961, February 20, 1972, and May 19, 1973, KMDA, C. 4.4.3, 1 nos. 2843–45.
52. Cordier to Van den Bergh, November 28, 1963, KMDA, C. 4.4.3, 1 no. 2843.
53. Van den Bergh to the Peruvian Ministry of Agriculture, October 24, 1963, KMDA, C. 4.4.3, 1 no. 2843.

54. Cordier to Van den Bergh, October 27, 1961, and January 1, 1962, KMDA, C. 4.4.3, 1 no. 2843.
55. Jean-Chrysostome Weregemere to Jean Baer and others, May 7, 1962, KMDA, C. 4.4.3, 1 no. 2843.
56. Baer to Mottershead, May 11, 1962, KMDA, C. 4.4.3, 1 no. 2843.
57. Ernst Lang to Van den Bergh, July 16, 1962, KMDA, C. 4.4.3, 1 no. 2843.
58. This is discussed more extensively in Violette Pouillard, "Vie et mort des gorilles de l'est (Gorilla Beringei) en captivité (1923–2012)," *Revue de Synthèse* 136 (2015): 386–87.
59. Cordier to Crandall, March 1, 1948, and June 2, 1948, WCS, 1019-AO2313_B1F10. J. Mortelmans, "Notes pour le Monsieur Charles Cordier," March 14, 1960; Van den Bergh to Cordier, July 8, 1964, both in KMDA, C. 4.4.3, 1 nos. 2843–44.
60. Cordier to Van den Bergh, April 2, 1959, and May 18, 1959, KMDA, C. 4.4.3, 1 no. 2843.
61. Cordier to Hediger, Stadtarchiv Zürich, VII.559.1.2.6.2, Schachtel 78.
62. Cordier to Van den Bergh, September 16, 1964, August 14, 1965, and December 7, 1965, KMDA, C. 4.4.3, 1 no. 2844; Cordier to Klös, December 28, 1966, AZGB, Zoologische Gärten und Grössere Tierhandlungen, O 1/2/172.
63. Cordier to Crandall, May 19, 1948, and November 21, 1948; Emy Cordier to Grace Daval, December 17, 1948, all in WCS, 1019-AO2305_B1F5; Cordier to Van den Bergh, October 19, 1958, October 27, 1961, and June 29, 1964, KMDA, C. 4.4.3, 1 nos. 2843–44.
64. Cordier to Gewalt (veterinarian, Berlin Zoo), November 7, 1965; and Klös to Cordier, December 14, 1965, both in AZGB, Zoologische Gärten und Grössere Tierhandlungen, O 1/2/172.
65. Crandall to Cordier, July 23 and August 26, 1942, WCS, 1019-AO2312_B6F3; Cordier to Crandall, December 18, 1947, WCS, 1019-AO2305_B1F5; Charles Cordier, "A la recherche des flamants dans la Haute Andes," *Zoo Magazine* 30 (1965): 83–87.
66. Cordier to Van den Bergh, May 18, 1959; Cordier to Van den Bergh, January 12, 1973, both in KMDA, C. 4.4.3, 1 nos. 2844–45; Cordier, "Flamingos in Bolivien," 13–16.
67. Cordier to Crandall, December 18, 1947, WCS, 1019-AO2305_B1F5; Cordier to Crandall, February 1, 1949, WCS, 1019-AO2306_B1F6; Cordier to Van den Bergh, January 13, 1960, KMDA, C. 4.4.3, 1 no. 2843.
68. "Further Adventures of Charles Cordier," 3.
69. Cordier to Van den Bergh, May 2, 1964, KMDA, C. 4.4.3, 1 no. 2844.
70. Charles Cordier, "Les Gorilles et Leur Capture," *Zoo Magazine* 26 (1960): 20–31.
71. Cordier to Crandall, November 21, 1948, WCS, 1019-AO2305_B1F5; Cordier to Van den Bergh, November 14, 1974, all in KMDA, C. 4.4.3, 1 no. 2845; Cordier, "Betrachtungen über den Kongo-Pfau," 183.
72. Cordier to Crandall, February 14 and November 3, 1948; Cordier to Van den Bergh, October 19, 1958, and August 4, 1964, all in KMDA, C. 4.4.3, 1 nos. 2843–44;

- Cordier to Klös, July 11, 1961, AZGB, Zoologische Gärten und Grössere Tierhandlungen, O 1/2/138.
73. Cordier to Crandall, September 8 and 18, and November 21, 1948, and January 6 and February 1, 1949, WCS, 1019-AO2305_B1F5.
 74. Cordier to Daval, June 26, 1948, WCS, 1019-AO2305_B1F5.
 75. Cordier to Crandall, October 21, 1948, WCS, 1019-AO2305_B1F5.
 76. Cordier, "Collecting the Ocellated Turkey"; Charles Cordier, "Bird-Collecting Adventures in Guatemala," *Animal Kingdom* 50 (1947): 89–97.
 77. Cordier, "Flamingos in Bolivien," 15.
 78. Cordier to governor-general, March 14, 1960, KMDA, C. 4.4.3, 1 no. 2843.
 79. Cordier to Van den Bergh, May 15, 1961, KMDA, C. 4.4.3, 1 no. 2843.
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 81. Cordier, "Bird-Collecting Adventures in Guatemala," 89.
 82. Cordier to Van den Bergh, April 11, 1960, KMDA, C. 4.4.3, 1 no. 2843.
 83. See Brian Regal, *Searching for Sasquatch: Crackpots, Eggheads, and Cryptozoology* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); John Miller, "Zooheterotopias," in *The Globalization of Space: Foucault and Heterotopia*, ed. John Miller and Mariangela Palladino (London: Routledge, 2015), 149–64.
 84. Bernard Heuvelmans, *Sur la piste des bêtes ignorées* (Paris: Plon, 1955).
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 87. Cordier to Klös, January 30, 1960, AZGB, Zoologische Gärten und Grössere Tierhandlungen, O 1/2/133.
 88. Cordier to Van den Bergh, April 11 and 16, 1960; Cordier to the exploitation director at Cobelmine, May 6, 1960, all in KMDA, C. 4.4.3, 1 no. 2843.
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